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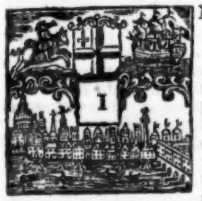
The *UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR*, AND WEEKLY JOURNAL.

By **Henry Stonecastle**, of *Lincoln's-Inn, Esq*;

SATURDAY May 12, 1744.

To the AUTHOR *of the* UNIVERSAL SPECTATOR.

Mr. STONECASTLE,



IN one of your *Speculations*, some Time ago, you mention'd an *Edict* of *Henry* IV, King of *France*, againſt the *wearing of Gold and Silver Lace* upon Apparel. I believe you had then forgot an Eſſay of *Montaigne* concerning *ſumptuary Laws*, wherein we have a pretty deal to the ſame Purpoſe: So much, that if the *Edict* above mention'd was *really iſſued*, I ſhould imagine the *King* was beholden for his Thought to the *Philoſopher*. When there is ſuch Occaſion as at preſent, to diſcountenance *Extravagance in Expence*, I cannot but think every Thing tending that Way will be *uſeful* to the Publick.

Montaigne is of Opinion, that the Manner in which *Laws* have been deſign'd to *moderate the Luxury* of the *Table* and of *Dreſs*, are directly contrary to their End. He is not for any *Penalty* to reſtrain it; but ſays, the beſt Method would be to raiſe a *Contempt* of the *wearing of Gold or Silver*, as uſeleſs Things, whoſe *Worth* depends entirely upon our *Eſtimation*.

To allow none but *Perſons of Fortune* to eat *Delicacies*, or to *wear Velvets* and *Tiſſues*, and interdict them to the *common People*, what is it but to give them *Reputation*, and increaſe the *Deſire* of having them? *Princes*, in Matters of this Nature, may do more by *Example* than they can by *Precept*: Would they begin to leave off *ſuperfluous Expences*, within a Month or two the *Courtiers* would all follow them, and the *Populace* would ſoon ape the *Courtiers*; ſo that *without* Edict, Ordinance, Poclamation, or Act of Parliament, we ſhould *voluntarily become parſimonious*. This, at leaſt, is the Opinion of our *witty Eſſayiſt*, who goes on to the following Effect.

The *Statutes* ſhould ſpeak a quite contrary Voice to that of Prohibition to the *Poor only*. 'No *Man* or *Woman*, of what Quality ſoever, ſhould, upon Pain of great Forfeitures, be ſuffer'd to wear what the Government would diſcourage, except *Strolling Players*, and *Common Strumpets*.'—This *Thought* was undoubtedly the Foundation of *Henry's Ordinance*, having been publiſhed ſome Years before his Reign.

With ſuch an Edict did *Zaleucus* formerly correct the licentious Manners of the *Locrines*: 'Be it enacted, ſays 'his Statute, that no *Free Woman* ſhall have more than 'one *Maid* to follow her when ſhe goes abroad, except 'ſhe be drunk: Nor ſhall any Woman go *out of the City* 'by Night, or wear either *Gold*, *Jewels*, or *Embroidery*, 'unleſs ſhe be a *profeſſed public Whore*.'—He alſo decreed, that, 'except *Bullies* and *Bretkel-Houſe-keepers*, no Man 'ſhould wear either *rich Garments*, or *Rings* upon his 'Fingers.'—By ſuch *contemptuous Exceptions*, our Author obſerves, he ingeniouſly drew off his Fellow Citizens from *vain Superfluities*, and *pernicious Dainties*.

Plato, in his *Laws*, lays it down for a Maxim, that nothing can be more hurtful in a Commonwealth, than for *Youth* to have the Reins of *Liberty* in their *own Hands*; to be ſuffered frequently to *change their Faſhions*, and run after *new Devices*. As human Nature is at all Times the *ſame*, it may be worth while to conſider if *ſuch Extravagancies* do not deſerve ſome Notice in the *Monarchy of Britain*, as well as they did in the *Republick of Athens*.

Yours, &c.

PLAINLOVE.

From my own APARTMENT.

I Am entirely of this Gentleman's Opinion, both as to the *Neceſſity* in general of ſome Stop being put to the Taſte for *Expence* and *Luxury*, that prevails in the preſent Age, and as to the *Means of effecting it* rather by making the Thing *ridiculous* and *contemptible*, than *penal*. It is indeed a great Pity that to ſhew the *Evil Tendency* and *fatal Conſequences* of it, ſhould not be ſufficient to *divert* from any *bad Habit*: But the Fact is certainly true that *it is not*, and therefore it is neceſſary to treat Human Nature as ſhe *appears*, not as we would *conceive of her* according to a perfect Idea.

We find it has been the ſame in all Ages, and that Authors *ſucceeded* or *failed* as they were more or leſs acquainted with this *Secret of their own Minds*. *Horace* knew it well, and therefore is to this Day read with more *Pleaſure* than any other *Roman Satiriſt*: *Boileau* hit upon ſomewhat of the *ſame Manner*, and by that Means obtained the Character of being the *fineſt Genius* in *France*; and we know how much the *greateſt of Engliſh* Poets owes of his *lateſt* and *higheſt Reputation* to the ſame *curious Happineſs*. The Names of this kind are but few among the *Men of Power*, any more than among the *Men of Wit*: But a *Zeleucus* or a *Henry* IV, who gives the *Royal Satire* this Turn againſt *Vice* or *Folly*, deſerves as honourable a Place on the Bench of *Princes*, as the *Roman*, the *French*, or the *Engliſh Poet* enjoys among the Reſt of his *reſpective Nation*.

The Countenance given by Men of *ſuperior Birth*, *Fortune*, or *Underſtanding*, to any Cuſtom that *degrades Human Nature*, will always have more Effect to *ſupport*, than the moſt ſevere Laws will have to *ſuppreſs it*. Would ſuch Perſons ſcorn to aſſociate with thoſe who are *famous* for ſome *infamous Excellence*, the Taſte of the *ſervile Imitators* would ſoon take a different Turn. Would they deſpiſe *Vanity* and *Senſuality*, the Incentives to that Extravagance in *Dreſs* and *Diſhes* which our *French* Eſſayiſt condemns, we ſhould find very few that would make to themſelves a *Merit* of being *vain* or *ſenſual*; and thoſe who *did*, would be look'd upon with *Contempt* by the Reſt of Mankind.

Montaigne, the Author my Correſpondent has had recourſe to, affords ſuch a *Miſcellany of Entertainment* to a Perſon who reads in him half an Hour (as I did on the *preſent Occaſion*) that it is hardly poſſible of a ſudden to turn the Thoughts upon any *other Writer*. I remember it is a ſaying of ſomebody, that if *all the Books* in the World were to be *deſtroy'd*, except the Bible and *two more*, he would chuſe that thoſe two ſhould be *Plutarch* and *Montaigne*, both of them famous in the *miſcellaneous* Way of Writing. This will excuſe me for concluding my Paper with a few more *Remarks* from the *latter* of theſe Gentlemen.

Among the *Titles* of his Eſſays, who, that had never ſeen them, would think that this ſhould be one?

CHAP. XXVI. Of Thumbs.

It is very *ſhort*, and the Reader will ſee that I do not quite deviate from my *Correſpondent's Deſign* in giving the Subſtance of it at this Time of *military Preparations*.

He tells us *Tacitus* reports, that among certain barbarous Kings, for the Confirmation of an *inviolable Covenant*, the Manner was, to join their *right Hands* cloſe and firm together, and *clench their Thumbs round each other*: And when by *hard preſſing* the Blood appeared at their Ends, they made a *gentle Puncture*, and mutually *ſuck'd* one another's *Blood*. Phyſicians ſay Thumbs are the *Maſter-Fingers* of the Hand, and that their *Latin* Etymology comes from *poſſere*, *to be able*. The *Grecians* call the Thumb by a Name which ſignifies *another Hand*: And it ſeems the *Latins* ſometimes took it in that Senſe, for a *whole Hand*.

The Example he brings from Martial *to confirm this, I chuſe neither to inſert nor tranſlate.*

It was in *Rome* a Sign of Favour to *wring and kiſs the Thumbs*.

Faſtor utroque tuum laudabit Pollice Ludum. HOR.

The Fav'ror praiſe thy Play with both his Thumbs:

And of Diſfavour to *lift them up*, and *turn them away*.

——— *Converſo Pollice Vulgi*
Quemlibet occidunt populariter ———

With Thumbs averſe the Vulgar popularly kill.

Such as were *diſabled in their Thumbs*, were by the *Roman* excuſed from going to War, becauſe they had *loſt the Graſp* of their Weapons. *Auguſtus* confiſcated the Goods of a Roman Knight, who had *maliciouſly cut off the Thumbs* of his two Boys, to prevent their ever going into the Service. And before him, in the Time of the *Italian* Wars, the *Senate* condemned *Caius Vatienus* to perpetual Impriſonment, and confiſcated all his Effects, becauſe he had *cut off the Thumb of his Left Hand* to exempt him from the Campaign.

One whoſe Name I have forgot, having gained a great Victory by Sea, cauſed all his Captive Enemies to have *their Thumbs cut off*, to deprive them of the Power either of *fighting*, or *handling their Oars*. The *Athenians diſ-thumb'd* the People of *Egineta*, to take from them their Preheminence in the Art of *Navigation*. In *Lacedæmon*, Maſters puniſhed their Scholars by *tying their Thumbs*.

Thus far our Author. We might add to his Caſes the *Engliſh* judiciary Cuſtom of *tying the Thumbs of a Criminal*, who refuſes to plead to his Indictment.

But I take Notice of *this Chapter* chiefly in regard to an Article or two in the *public Prints*, and others that have been reported ſince the *preſent Preſs*. Several ſtout Fellows, it ſeems, and one of them a *Theatrical Boxer* too, have *cut off* ſome their *Fingers*, ſome their *Thumbs*, to excuſe them at this Time of *Exigency* from his *Majeſty's Service*.

Whether it has had the *Effect* or no, I have not been informed: But if every *able Hand*, that has been thus *voluntarily deprived of a Thumb*, were *ſtigmatized*, and the Perſon rendered an Object of *indelible Contempt* among the meaneſt of his own Rank, I queſtion if any *Coward* in the Kingdom would be *brave enough* to diſmember himſelf for Fear of Danger. *Shame* might effect what *natural Courage* could not, which would be making it anſwer a *virtuous End*, according to Mr. PLAINLOVE's *Project*.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

Petersbourg, *April* 18. We are aſſur'd, that the Empreſs has plainly told the Marqueſs de la Chetardie, that ſhe will be ready to treat with the French Court, as ſoon as it ſhall appear to her that his Moſt Chriſtian Majeſty aims at nothing elſe but interpoſing his good Offices to compromiſe the Differences that have kindled up the War, and makes no other Propoſals but ſuch as may conduce to that ſalutary End; which ſhews that her Imperial Majeſty will never ſwerve from her cloſe Engagements with the Courts of London and Vienna ——Of this we have a Confirmation in the following Article from Moſcow, if either may be credited.

Moſcow, *April* 14. All the late Reports concerning the Marqueſs de la Chetardie, are very much to be queſtion'd. His Excellency is not better look'd upon at Court than the other Foreign Miniſters, and the Negotiations for an Alliance between France, the Northern Powers, and Pruſſia, are not in greater Forwardneſs than they were on the Day he arriv'd here, the Empreſs not having yet even nam'd Commiſſaries to conſer with this Miniſter. It is true, he has made ſome Overtures to Count Beſtucheff, the Vice-Chancellor; but the Count gave him to underſtand, that he could not receive any Propoſals from him, until he had preſented his Credentials to her Imperial Majeſty at a publick Audience, and given her the Titles which ſhe ſo juſtly pretends to. Since the Arrival of the Lord Tyrawley, the French Embaſſador has very much alter'd his Tone, ſeeing the great Regard which the Court and every body has for the Britiſh Miniſter, beſides that, independently of Treaties, the Intereſt of Commerce muſt always be a Means to unite Ruſſia and Great Britain.

Stockholm, *April* 27. Count Sparre, who had been ſent to Moſcow, to communicate to that Court the Accommodation concluded between Sweden and Denmark, is come back with the Empreſs's Anſwer, who approves the ſaid Accommodation in every Article: Her Imperial Majeſty alſo offers, at the ſame time, to leave her Troops in this Kingdom, the better to provide for its Safety upon any unforeſeen Event.———And why not, ſince *poor* Sweden is in ſuch imminent Danger of being ſwallow'd up by *ſo formidable* a Neighbour as Denmark.

The ſame Day Margaret Green was committed to Clerkenwell Bridewell by Sir Thomas De Veil, after eight Hours Examination, for poiſoning ſeveral Bakers, of whom ſhe bought Half-penny Loaves, pretending ſhe would eat no Bread that they did not firſt taſte; and having Arſnick conceal'd about her, of which ſhe rubb'd a Quantity on each Role, as many of them as comply'd with her Deſire were immediately taken very ill; and had it not been for Vomits which they inſtantly took, they muſt all have died; but in a particular Manner Mr. James Chandlour, who is ſtill very bad, though he brought up moſt Part of the Poiſon. When before the above Gentleman ſhe fought deſperately, to prevent being ſearch'd, and in the Struggle dropp'd a Paper of the ſaid Poiſon at her Feet, which prov'd to be white Arſnick.

They write from Winchester, that for ſome Time paſt that City has been infeſted by a Set of Villains, who have let ſcarce a Night paſs without attempting to break open ſomebody's Houſe; and laſt Tueſday Solomon Biſhop, a Soldier, was committed to Winchester Goal for breaking open ſeveral Houſes in the City: This Fellow and his Companions have been a Terror to the Inhabitants for above a Month paſt.

Laſt Saturday was committed to Winchester Gaol in Hampſhire, James Booth, for ſtealing a Brown Bay Horſe, from Thomas Roots, of Nothiam, in the ſame County; and alſo for ſtealing a Brown Bay Horſe from Richard Batchelor, of the ſame Place; and likewiſe for ſtealing a Horſe from Thomas Barlett, of Ewhurſt in Surrey, the 17th paſt. He is a moſt notorious Offender, and has confeſs'd that he has liv'd by Horſe-ſtealing for ſeven Years paſt, and that he has ſtolen upwards of one hundred Horſes in that Time.

Yeſterday ſe'nnight the Houſe of Mr. Eames, a Gardener on Mill-Bank, was broke open in the Night, and robb'd of all the Kitchen Utenſils. A great Dog which uſed to guard the Houſe was taken away, and found in the Neighbourhood tied up. Some Perſons are taken up on Suſpicion of committing this Robbery.

On Sunday Henry Cole was detain'd in New Priſon by Sir Thomas De Veil, upon the Oath of Mrs. Mary Fiziere, for feloniouſly returning from Tranſportation before the Expiration of his Time: He was convicted at Kingſton Aſſizes, between four and five Years ago, for ſtealing out of the Houſe of the ſaid Mrs. Frazure eleven Holland Shirts of the Value of 5 l. and ten Table-Cloths of the Value of 3 l. and is ſworn to be the ſame identical Perſon.

Extract of a Letter from Riga, *dated* April 16.

'On the 9th of this Month moſt of the Ice in the 'River Dwina broke, but, very unluckily for us, ſtopt 'in its Paſſage, at a ſmall Diſtance from Bullera, which 'occaſion'd ſuch a monſtrous Riſe of the Waters, that 'our Suburbs, half the City, and all the Villages, for 'four Leagues round, were in a ſhort Space of Time, 'under Water. Our Bridges, in general, were carried 'away by the Stream, and ſo were the Houſes by the 'River Side; and that with ſuch Rapidity, that the 'poor Inhabitants had not Time to make their Eſcape. 'This Inundation continued for the Space of three 'Times 24 Hours, and the Miſeries it occaſion'd are 'not to be expreſs'd by Words. There were great Numbers of People to be ſeen ſtanding on the Tops of 'Houſes and Chimnies, crying out for Help; while 'Children were ſwimming down the Stream in their 'Cradles; and Numbers of People, of all Ages and 'Sexes, were cruſh'd to Pieces by the Coalition of great 'Rocks of Ice. We reckon, according to the moſt 'moderate Computation, that 600 Perſons have loſt 'their Lives by this terrible and melancholy Accident, 'together with incredible Quantities of Cattle of all 'Sorts. Our Situation could not be worſe than it is, if 'we had been expos'd to a long Siege; for it is certain, 'that in five Years Time we ſhall not be able to repair 'the publick Buildings, Baſtions, Sluices, Bridges, &c. 'ſo that the Whole of this Miſchief cannot be computed at leſs than 600,000 Rix Dollars.'

From the London Gazette.

Whitehall, May 8. The King has been pleaſed to grant unto the Right Hon. Thomas Lord Lovell, the Dignities of Viſcount and Earl of the Kingdom of Great-Britain, by the Name, Stile and Title of Viſcount Coke of Holkam in the County of Norfolk, and Earl of Leiceſter.

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Grace was in all her Steps, Heav'n in her Eye,
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Of whiſpering and laughing in Company.
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Of talking before Servants.
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Of Ridicule. Of Politicks.
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GEORGE R.

GEORGE the Second, by the Grace of God, of Great-Britain, France, and Ireland, King Defender of the Faith, &c. to all whom theſe Preſents ſhall come Greeting: Whereas our truſty and well-beloved (Peter Henry) Dr. of Phyſick, in the Pariſh of St. Andrew's, Holbourn, in the County of Middleſex, hath by his Petition humbly repreſented to us, that he hath with much Study, and at a great Expence found out, and made a certain Chymical Remedy, called 'his nervous Medicine for the cure of all nervous 'Diſorders, viz. Convulſive Fits, Epilepſies, Falling Sickneſs, Vertigoes, violent Head-achs, Miſts before the Eye, 'Swoonings of the Head, Hyſterick Vapours, Hypochondriacal Melancholy, Faintings, Lowneſs of Spirits, Palpitation and Trembling of the Heart, trembling of the Nerves, &c. as a great many of our Subjects have already happily experienc'd; and which will be greatly advantagious to numbers more in theſe nervous Caſes: He therefore moſt humbly prays, that we would be graciouſly pleaſed to grant him our Royal Letters Patent; and we being willing to give Encouragment to all Arts and Inventions which may tend for the publick Good, are moſt graciouſly pleaſed to condeſcend to the Petitioner's Requeſt: Know ye therefore, that we, of our ſpecial Grace and certain Knowledge, and with the Advice of our Privy Council, and in order to make this Remedy more beneficial to the Subjects in general, have moſt graciouſly condeſcended to grant theſe our Letters Patent under the Great Seal of Great-Britain to Dr. Henry, the Patentee, with full Power and Authority to make and vend the ſame; and we do, by theſe Preſents require, and ſtrictly command all our Subjects, directly or indirectly, to make or put in Practice the ſaid Invention, or in any part of the ſame, nor in any manner counterfeit, imitate, or reſemble the ſame, under Pains and Penalties on ſuch Offenders, to be inflicted for the Contempt of our Royal Command; and we do command all Juſtices, Mayors, Sheriffs, Miniſters, &c. in no manner to trouble or hinder the ſaid Peter Henry in the Execution of the ſaid Invention.

Witneſs our ſelves at Weſtminſter the ſeventh of February, in the Seventeenth Year of our Reign.

By His Majeſty's Command,

HOLLES NEWCASTLE.

Note, All that is to be ſaid further in this Caſe is, that by long Experience it hath been found the moſt certain Remedy yet diſcovered, for the effectual Cure of all the aforeſaid Diſorders; rectifies the vicious Quality of the Blood, diſcharges Wind out of the Stomach and Bowels, ſtirs up the digeſtive Faculty, cauſes a free Circulation to the Blood, thereby gives Relief in all Pains of the Head, removes hyſterick Vapours, Faintings, and Lowneſs of Spirit, and many other nervous Ailments.

It is only to be had in London of Dr. Henry, the Patentee, in Hatton-Garden; and by Mr. Brown, Bookſeller, in Briſtol, at Seven Shillings the pint Bottle, including a Box of Pills and a Paper of Cephalick Snuff, which hath been found proper for the more ſpeedy Relief in Pains of the Head.

This Medicine will keep good in any Climate, and Allowance is given to thoſe that ſell again.

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